

Spiritual Warfare: The Nature of Our Enemies – Part 3 (6:10-13)

¹⁰ A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹² **For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.** ¹³ Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil.

Summary:

- Spiritual warfare must be understood in the context of God's purpose.
- God's purpose is that we should "glorify Him" in our lives which simply means that I live in such a way that people can see who God is through my life
- Our enemies are intent on hiding or distorting the picture of God displayed in our lives
- The Evil Trifecta: The Devil, the World, and Our Flesh, all collaborating to defeat us.
- The Devil: Opposer, Deceiver, Tempter, and Hinderer
- The World: Cravings, Distractions, Wrestling

What is "The Flesh"?

- A neutral term in Scripture meaning simply "the physical body; the physical existence"
- Our Physical Existence

Galatians 6:16-17 (The Message)

My counsel is this: Live freely, animated and motivated by God's Spirit. Then you won't feed the compulsions of selfishness (the "Flesh"). For there is a root of sinful self-interest in us that is at odds with a free spirit, just as the free spirit is incompatible with selfishness. These two ways of life are contrary to each other, so that you cannot live at times one way and at times another way according to how you feel on any given day.

- "Compulsions of Selfishness"
- "Root of Self-Interest"

[The Flesh is] whatever weakens your reasoning, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes away your desire for spiritual things...in short, if anything increases the power of the flesh over the Spirit, to you that is sin no matter how good it is in itself. -- Susanna Wesley

- The Flesh "Weakens Your Reasoning"
- "Impairs the Tenderness of Your Conscience"
- "Obscures Your Sense of God"
- "Takes Away Your Desire for Spiritual Things"

"Flesh is any human action or achievement without without...glorifying Christ Jesus." – John Piper

- "Without Glorifying Christ"

The Flesh Most Simply is Focusing on Myself

- Remember our definition of “Sin”:
- Our lives display the desires and achievements of Me instead of the God and His Goodness.
 - Highlighting Ourselves instead of Highlighting God

Romans 8:7-8 (The Message)

Obsession with self...is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God [Hostile towards God]. Anyone absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing. And God isn't pleased at being ignored.

- The Flesh Fights to Stay in Charge of My Life
- The Flesh Fights to Get My Needs Met
- The Flesh Demands My Needs Are Primary
- The Flesh Allows Religion/Spiritual/Good If it Does Not Significantly Compete With My Interests
- The Flesh Manipulates the Good of Religion/Spiritual to Serve My Own Needs

Galatians 2:20

My old self has been crucified with Christ.^[e] It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

To Sum Up the Nature of Our Enemies:

1. **The Devil: Opposer, Deceiver, Tempter, and Hinderer**
2. **The World: Offers Me Only Cravings (not true fulfillment) and Distracts Me With It**
3. **The Flesh: Keeps Me Focused on My Needs and Desires**

Next Week...

The Enemies' Favorite and Most Effective Tactics